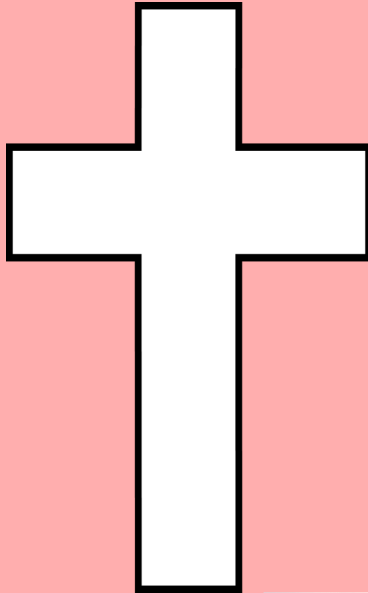




St. Alban's Earsdon



CHURCH VIEWS

**May
2025**

£1.00



St. John's Backworth



**Immaculate Heart of Mary,
Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea**

THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

May 2025

This month the whole country will be looking back eighty years to 8 May 1945, VE-Day, and no doubt we will tire of the euphoric newsreels and pictures celebrating the end of hostilities. It certainly ended a time when the names of far-away places had become familiar, like El Alamein or Stalingrad. Devastatingly, even obscure villages like Bergen-Belsen had also established a more notorious presence. Mothers and children who had only 'gone to the pictures' would always remember the black and white images of the newsreels shown between films, without any warning, of bulldozers clearing the camp.

But during the next months families like my parents' came back together for the first time in years - the cherished photos became real people again as their brothers and sons came back from Malta, the Middle East and Germany; came ashore from Atlantic and Russian convoys. But one photo would stay just that - the handsome young ERA on board HMS Barham, my mother's brother, would forever remain with his ship.

But the foundations of a better future had already been laid, mostly unnoticed. The Butler Act had been debated before D-Day and in August 1944 its Royal Assent paved the way for free education up to University level and religious schools became state-maintained, levelling up an important playing field. Another provision raised the school-leaving age to fifteen, not to the unalloyed joy of some youngsters. The first moves to establish the National Parks came later in 1945, seeking to preserve those places of beauty, calm and tranquillity that we now take for granted.

In those times of war, shortages and rationing, such visions of hope in the future have to be applauded.

VE-Day heralded many new openings of greater things. My father, listening to that announcement in the blackened remains of Hamburg where his unit ended the war, could not have envisaged that his children and grandchildren would benefit from an education denied to him; that they would hold degrees and higher degrees and enter professions that had been so firmly closed to him and his brothers. He would have been even more surprised that they would go on to enjoy holidays in the rebuilt Europe he had fought through from Normandy to Germany.

Maia was the goddess of renewal and growing, of hope for the future, so let's view VE Day as it was truly, a brilliant start as well as an end. At the time of this anniversary, even as we mourn the death of Pope Francis, the founder of this Jubilee Year of Pilgrims of Hope, the great doors of every catholic cathedral in the world will still remain open, potent symbols for our minds and hearts.

“God is the light that illuminates the darkness, even if it does not dissolve it, and a spark of divine light is within each of us.”

Pope Francis, 1936 -2025

Gerry Latimer

Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea

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Ali Griffiths:

We had a great day today at our Granddaughter Penelope Aida's Baptism 05/04/2025 - it was a lovely service done by our vicar Tim Mayfield at St Alban's church, then on to Whitley Bay Golf Club to celebrate.

Congratulations Emma Kate Brewis & Stevie Griffiths; Penelope was a real star today. Total Perfection.



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A Warmer Welcome to St John's

By Rev'd Tim Mayfield.

'Good morning, and warmly welcome to worship at St John's.'

For long enough, there was a bit of a hollow ring to those words. When we came to heat St John's Church in Backworth in October 2023, we found that the gas boiler had conked out. The parts we needed to repair the boiler were obsolete, so we had a choice. We could either install a new gas boiler. Or we could do something different.

The Diocese of Newcastle has the aim of reaching Net Zero by 2030. So there seemed no point in installing a new boiler that would burn fossil fuels. In fact, the Church Council voted unanimously to go electric. We called in our architect, Christopher Blackburn, and he pointed us towards Dunphy Ecclesiastical Heating.

In February 2024, Dunphy quoted just under £35,000 (ex VAT) for a scheme using 14 radiators. Thanks to the generous legacy of the late Gladys Cross (given on the understanding that it would be used to protect the fabric of St John's) we knew we would be able to pay this in full.

There was, however, a potential snag. St John's was told that we would need 3 Phase power to the building, to supply the new radiators. Dunphy estimated that this might cost anything between £3,000 and £75,000. In the end, Northern Powergrid first quoted £6,264.45 to do this work. It was – later – a very happy day when Northern Powergrid rang again to say that there already *was* 3 Phase power to the building. Having shivered through two long winters, we could crack on as soon as Dunphy were available.

So on Monday February 10th 2025, work commenced. In a case of 'feast or famine', the church was comically hot on Sunday March 2nd. But then we had our tutorial in how to use the new system.

And on Ash Wednesday, March 5th, the new system was working perfectly. We were finally able – after a very long gap – to offer a welcome to St John's that was warm in every sense.

Backworth now has one of the Diocese of Newcastle's first Net Zero churches. We are heated electrically, using Green Tariff Octopus Energy.

Another very happy spin-off of this new development is that we are finally able once again to welcome Backworth Park Primary School to worship at St John's. The children are pictured at their Easter service on Tuesday April 8th.



The children of Backworth Park Primary School at the Easter Service in St John's on Tuesday April 8th.

Churchwarden Ali cosy and warm next to one of the new radiators.



At the Battlefront....

From Jo McEvedy

Hello, St Alban's! Here I am reporting from the Church of the Good Shepherd in Battle Hill, as I approach the last six weeks of my placement there.

As you know, it is part of the requirements of my training as a Reader that I embarked on this long placement 'in a context different from my own' and I also didn't make much secret of my reluctance to do it! 'Why do I have to go somewhere else?' I literally grumbled, from weeks beforehand. 'I'm not going anywhere else once I'm licensed; I don't see the point.' You all gave me a wonderful send-off in January, and it was with mingled trepidation and foot-dragging that I set off the following Sunday to drive all of ten minutes to get to my new church, where I had been booked to preach at my very first service...

Well, how wrong was I? COGS (as they call themselves) is a fantastically warm and friendly environment and I was immediately welcomed by all and sundry. That first service went well and I quickly felt quite at home. COGS is part of the Willington team of churches and is ecumenical in that it combines Anglican, Methodist and URC (United Reformed Church) worship, in two services every Sunday, both of which are well attended. The liturgy is a little different than I'm used to; in fact, it varies from week to week, so that it reflects the diversity of the congregation, and it's also quite informal and relaxed. I do miss the choir, of course, and the music, but they love their hymns there and accompaniment is provided either by one of several talented pianists or by a guitar/alto recorder combo, which sounds great and really suits the ambience of the building.

I've learned so much and had some great new experiences. Good Friday was a bit different for me: in the morning there was a big outdoor family-friendly service in a park, with the Salvation Army

band, a dramatized Passion (I played Pilate!) and an Easter egg hunt – about 200 people were there, and luckily the sun shone. But then at 2.00 I went to a ‘Last Hour’ service at the church which comprised mostly sitting in silence while appropriate sentences were read at intervals and a cross of candles were one by one extinguished. This was quite hard work mentally and emotionally, but very moving and quite the contrast from the morning.

On Easter Day, a small group of us arrived at the church at 5 a.m, when it was just getting light, to walk up to the Rising Sun Hill, have a short service and light a fire for first light, which we then took back to light the Paschal candle with. I carried my jam-jar of flame very carefully!

I’ve had lots of practice of preaching, to a range of audiences, as well as intercessions, and leading services; one of my favourites was assisting at a baptism, where I did a 5-minute talk and provided themed activities for the children present. They do have a lovely custom for baptisms there: instead of filling the font ready, they put out 12 glasses of water and invite, at the right moment, members of the baptism party, and anyone else who wants, to come and pour them into the font. This is particularly enjoyed by any children involved, and really makes the point that everyone is participating in this special moment.

I have missed you all a lot and am looking forward to coming home in June. Hopefully we will all benefit from my experience!

All the best,
Jo

Thank you so much Jo, for this lovely insight into your training for Readership. We wish you well, and look forward to your return in the summer.

Weather Outlook for the month of May 2025.

Direct from the Captain's Charts.

Sunday 27th April to Wednesday 7th May 2025.

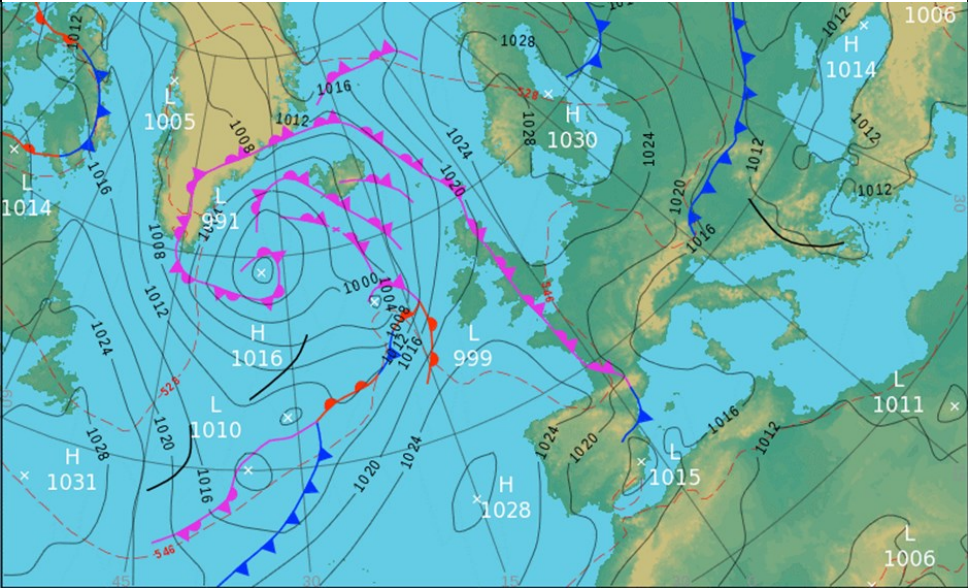
The month starts off with a northwest to southeast split (the product of an occluded front passing over the country from west to east. Higher pressure located towards the southeast should bring fine and increasingly warm conditions across the southern UK, whilst there is a greater chance of periods of cloud, rain and stronger winds affecting the north for a time, once the initial prevailing frontal trough(s) have passed clear, there will be extended periods of fine weather in the northeast at times.

There is a small chance that fine and very warm weather could extend right across the country early to mid next week, followed by the possibility of cloud/rain in the northwest that will sink southeast introducing more changeable and cooler conditions in its path during mid next week. Towards the end of the forecast period, we see a resumption of mainly fine and dry conditions followed by a continuation of more changeable weather containing a mixture of rain and drier interludes. Temperatures are likely to be below average during the first part of this predicted range.

Thursday 8th to Friday 30th May 2025.

Forecast confidence is lower than average for this predicted range, although fairly typical for late Spring. A mixture of drier and settled periods in balance with equal periods of wetter and more unsettled conditions throughout the country. Temperatures are likely to be around average overall, with a slightly increased chance of warm and/or hot spells. Any such spells could be accompanied by local heavy showers and thunderstorms.

**North Atlantic Surface Pressure Chart Prediction for 12:00 hrs
(UTC) on Saturday 26th April 2025.**



David Gibson

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CHURCH VIEWS FOR MAY 2025 FROM THE PARISH OF OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA



Pope Francis, 1936 - 2025

A Personal View

I thought I had just completed this month's piece when news came of the death of His Holiness Pope Francis, and tributes poured in from world leaders. I saw him as someone who broke the mould, a Pope with a world vision wider than leading the Church. He was the first Jesuit to be Pope, the first non-European Pope for more than a millennium, the first Francis.

His choice of name was significant, showing a devotion to St Francis of Assisi. St Francis had a great concern for nature and our world, echoed by Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si*, and the saint also reached out to others, seeking peace in the world he lived in. During the Fifth Crusade he managed to get through the enemy siege lines to plead for peace and reconciliation face to face with Sultan Malik-al-Kami of Egypt. The peace did not come, but out of respect he was safely returned. A very early "Let us learn to love everyone.....even when they do not love us."

Pope Francis travelled the world more widely than any Pope before him and appropriately his aircraft call-sign was 'Shepherd One'. He prayed with millions for peace, asking nations to "build bridges not walls", always recognising the needs of the marginalised, the voiceless, the vulnerable. He was in daily contact with those sheltering in the Holy Family Church, the only Catholic church in Gaza. The countries he visited could not have been more different; but whether as poor as the Philippines or as prosperous as the United States, his message remained the same - we have to reach out to one another with kindness.

His humility and practicality show even in his burial directive for a simple wooden coffin, in the ground, bearing only his name, Franciscus.

A Wonderful Easter



This year we all gathered in St Edward's, the biggest of the three churches in our two parishes. Readers, musicians and servers from all our churches joined together to make it a truly memorable Eastertide. The highlight of the Easter Vigil Mass was the end of the 'Journey of Faith' for seven people who were welcomed into full communion with the Church when they were baptised, took the Eucharist and were confirmed during the Mass. A wonderful celebration to open new chapters in our parishes.

No, I couldn't believe it either.....



Pictured among the daffodils on 14 April outside the Village Hotel.

Parish Mass Times:

St Edward's: Sunday 9.30am, Tuesday and Friday 9.30am Immaculate Heart of Mary: Saturday 6.00pm, Wed 9.30am .St Mary's: Sunday 11.00am, Thursday 10.00am. St Oswin's: Sunday 9.30am, Tuesday 10.00am

St Andrew's Majeleko – a possible parish twinning

By Rev'd Tim Mayfield.

Last month I wrote in 'Church Views' about my unforgettable fortnight in Tanzania in February. I mentioned a possible parish-to-parish twinning between Earsdon and Backworth and St Andrew's Church in a village called Majeleko.

Our pictures this month focus on views of Majeleko, and of St Andrew's. I was privileged to join in their worship on Sunday February 16th. This was joyous, exuberant, and held in the open air. I was given the great honour of preaching, and spoke about climate justice (drawing on the parable of the Good Samaritan).

Since I got back to the UK, conversations about the possible twinning have been continuing. At the March PCC meeting I presented a paper. This led to questions about the possible funding of Conservation Agriculture Animators. I wrote about these, too, in the April edition of 'Church Views'. It costs £375 to support an Animator for one year. This is a one-off cost, as, having received their training and passed it on, Animators return to farming their own plot. Majeleko has one Animator, Agnes, in post. Another, Veronica, is in training. Majeleko would like a further two to four Animators to be trained.

Meanwhile, the Support Group I mentioned last month had its first meeting on Monday April 7th. Liz York, Dianne Morgan and Suzanne Medows met with me to start this ball rolling. We would be delighted for others to come and join us. We are in good WhatsApp contact with the vicar of St Andrew's, Harun Wilson.

From the meeting I WhatsApped Harun the picture shown on page 19, opposite.

I wrote 'Jambo! (Hello!) How are you? This is Liz, Dianne and Suzanne. We are just having our first meeting about our friendship with St Andrew's. We would like to know what you are hoping for in the relationship between our two churches. Bwana asifiwe! (Praise the Lord!)

Liz,
Dianne and
Suzanne
from
St Alban's,
Earsdon



16 minutes later, Harun WhatsApped back: 'Oooooo! Send our greetings to Liz, Dianne and Suzanne. Tell that that me and Neema as well as our baby daughter Esther, we greet them. First of all we ask you and your congregation support in prayer. Second, we request you and your congregation support in building new St Andrew Church.'

The church is growing quickly in Tanzania. Churches are outgrowing their buildings. We saw several villages with a much larger church building taking shape alongside its smaller predecessor. Having completed our own building projects at Earsdon and Backworth, is it time to look further afield and pass on the support we ourselves received?

The conversation is ongoing. But one date we've love you to book in your diaries is July 26th. We plan to hold a Tanzanian evening at St Alban's. I'll be able to tell you much more about my trip, and where we stand in terms of this new partnership. Asante sana! ('thank you very much!')

The altar in St Andrew's



A general view of the village



The foundations of the new church



Drumming in the open air service





The choir

The children



Tim preaching at the open air service in Majeleko on February 16th

Tim with vicar Harun Wilson and his wife Neema



From Ali Griffiths:

A brilliant day at our Anna Chaplains “Crafts, Coffee, Communion” event at St Alban’s Church just before Easter. We had 7 ladies attending and creating some lovely Easter Bonnets. Well done ladies!



Cash-flow warnings at the Annual Meeting

St Alban's and St John's Annual Meeting followed the 10.30am service on Sunday April 6th. Rob Gowdy and Ali Griffiths were voted in for another year as churchwardens. We are very grateful to Rob and Ali for everything they do for us. They work very hard, and with a lovely spirit.

Treasurer Rob Swindells gave a challenging report on the current state of our finances...

- *We are currently losing £200 per month.
- *We need to bear in mind that grants from OFGEM in relation to the biomass boiler at St Alban's will end in eight years' time. This will result in significantly higher levels of expenditure as we pay for the biomass fuel.
- *We have not made any contributions to the diocese since November. This is because of cash-flow issues around the building work. It is fully expected that we will meet the parish share commitment for the year.
- *There is a shortfall of £7,000 in paying for the Netty Project. The project over-ran, incurring costs. We ordered extras along the way, like the tea boiler. Certain things like replacing all the lights in the church itself were never in the original costings. And sadly we were let down by one contractor who offered help in kind and then disappeared. We still have some grant income outstanding, and the PCC will reflect on other ways to plug the gap. We don't need to make final payment to our contractors NCS until the end of this year.

New members were voted onto the PCC: **Pauline Cornforth, Eddie Graham, Jennifer Lambert and Cathryn Richardson**. Meanwhile, we are grateful to **Max Taylor and Liz York** whose three-year terms ended recently. Tim commented that it's always good to aim for a blend of experienced members (who know the backstory) and fresh pairs of eyes (who can ask 'why do we do it like that?')

St. Alban's and St. John's

Diary Page for May 2025

Sunday	4th	<u>Third Sunday of Easter</u>		
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Wednesday	7th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	11th	<u>Fourth Sunday of Easter</u>		
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	15th	9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	18th	<u>Fifth Sunday of Easter</u>		
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Wednesday	21st	9.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Sunday	25th	<u>Sixth Sunday of Easter</u>		
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's
Thursday	29th	<u>Thursday: Ascension Day</u>		
		9.30am	Holy Communion	St John's
Sunday	1st	<u>Seventh Sunday of Easter</u>		
		9.00am	Holy Communion	St John's
		10.30am	Holy Communion	St Alban's

Church Views magazine email: magazine@stalbansearsdon.org.uk

Please note - all material for next month's magazine (June 2025) will need to be in before Wednesday 28th May. Thank you, *Jean*.

St. Alban's and St. John's

Sunday Gospel Readings for May 2025 :

4th

John 21.1-19

11th

John 10.22-30

18th

John 13.31-35

25th

John 5.1-9

1st June

John 17.20-end

Would you like to be confirmed?

Mark Wroe, the Bishop of Berwick, is coming to St Alban's for a confirmation service on Sunday July 20th. Please contact Revd Tim Mayfield (07414 601351) if you would like to be prepared for confirmation.

A Commissioning for the Pastoral Team 18.5

The members of our Pastoral Team will be commissioned at a special 10.30am service in St Alban's on Sunday May 18th. The Pastoral Team works alongside the vicar, sharing with him the privilege of caring for the congregation at St Alban's and St John's.

The Pastoral Team currently consists of Janet Dobson, Ali Griffiths, Linda Reynolds, Cathryn Richardson and Liz York. Do let us know if you would like to explore becoming a member of the team yourself.

Revd Tim Mayfield



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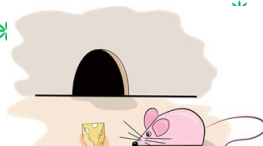
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* or call **Jean** on **0191 2377273.** *



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Children's Church Easter Special

On Sunday April 13th (Palm Sunday) Children's Church celebrated our Easter Special. Fifteen adults and fifteen children explored the Easter story through readings, craft and singing. Thanks to Barbara, each child had a cardboard cross shape (pictured). Onto this they stuck stickers marking the different stages of the Easter story, gradually filling up their cross with pictures.

A big feature of Children's Church is FOOD. On their way in to the service, the children were given lovely fresh cake baked by Barbara. Meanwhile, thanks to Ali, the parents had a delicious Hot Cross Bun. The children left happily clutching an Easter Egg (again thanks to Ali).

Our next Children's Church is on June 8th and will celebrate Pentecost.

Revd Tim Mayfield



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All in the month of May

It was ...

1300 years ago, on 26th May 725 that the Venerable Bede died. This English Benedictine monk, historian, linguist, translator and teacher is known as 'the father of English history'. He helped to popularise the idea of dating years from the birth of Christ (*Anno Domini* – AD)

200 years ago, on 7th May 1825, that Antonio Salieri died. An Italian composer, he helped to develop operas and taught composers including Liszt, Schubert, Beethoven and Mozart. He was rumoured to have poisoned Mozart, but this was later proven to be false.

125 years ago, on 17th May 1900 that during the Second Boer War, the 217-day Siege of Mafeking was relieved by 2000 British forces and South African volunteers. Colonel Robert Baden-Powell, who led the forces defending Mafeking during the siege, became a national hero, and later founded the Scouting movement.

90 years ago, on 19th May 1935 that T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) died in a motorcycle accident, aged 46. A British Army officer, military strategist, archaeologist and writer, he is best known for his activities in the Middle East during WW1.

80 years ago, on 8th May 1945 that VE Day took place – marking Victory in Europe at the end of WW2. It was celebrated as a public holiday.

75 years ago, on 23rd May 1950 that Martin McGuinness, Irish republican politician, was born. A prominent member of Sinn Féin and a former leader of the IRA, he became Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland until his death in office (2007-17).

40 years ago, on 13th May 1985 that the pop album *Brothers in Arms* by Dire Straits was released. It became the world's most successful album released on compact disc, and the first CD album to sell over a million copies.

Also 40 years ago, on 29th May 1985 that the Heysel Stadium Disaster took place in Brussels. 39 football fans were crushed to death during rioting at the European Cup Final between Liverpool and Juventus.

30 years ago, on 13th May 1995 that British mountaineer Alison Hargreaves became the first woman to reach the summit of Mount Everest unaided (without bottled oxygen or Sherpas.) She died later that year, in August, in a storm, while attempting to climb K2.

25 years ago, on 7th May 2000 that Vladimir Putin was inaugurated as President of Russia.

15 years ago, on 6th May 2010 that the British General Election resulted in a hung parliament. A coalition government was formed on 11th May by the Conservative Party leader, David Cameron, and the Liberal Democrat party leader, Nick Clegg.

WORDSEARCH

May 2025

The Nicene Creed is one of the most important documents in the world. It has shaped Christian belief for the past 1700 years, affecting hundreds of millions of lives. So here is a bigger Wordsearch than normal, in honour of the brave man who gave it to the Church!

This year is the 1700 anniversary of the Nicene Creed. Athanasius is the theologian behind that creed, and his feast day falls on 2nd May.

Athanasius

Nicene

Creed

Theologian

Egypt

Council

Bishop

Debate

Christ

Person

Worship

Divine

Eternal

Begotten

God

From

Light

True

One

Substance

Devotion

Scholarship

Church

State

Exiled

Flight

Hiding

Triumph

Christology

Alexandria



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PCC Secretary

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NE25 0SR

Tel: 07841 986 019

PCC Treasurer

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Parish Priest

Mgr. Andrew Faley

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to 1pm.